

Fishing Journal

Information For The Serious Angler

by John Martinis

July 2011

New Puget Sound Salmon Seasons

Area 5:

July 1-August 15: Daily Limit, two salmon, plus two additional Pinks. Release wild chinook, wild Coho and Chum.

See closure Area

August 16-Sept 18: Daily Limit, two salmon, plus two additional Pinks. Release Chinook, wild Coho and Chum

See closure Area

Sept 19-Sept 30: Daily limit two salmon, release chinook and chum

Nov. 1-Nov. 30: Daily limit two salmon, only one may be a chinook.

Feb. 16-April 10: Daily limit one salmon.

Area 6:

Selective Fishery Area

July 1-August 15: Daily Limit, two salmon, plus two additional Pinks. Release wild chinook, wild coho and chum.

See closures

Chinook Release Area

July 1-Aug 15: Daily limit two salmon plus two additional Pinks. Release Chinook, wild Coho and Chum

Entire Area

August 16-Sept 18: Daily Limit, two salmon, plus two additional Pinks. Release Chinook, wild Coho and Chum. See Closures

John's Sporting Goods Online Store

Click here for Link to Online Store

My new online store has been a great success since it went online in early June. Thanks to all of you who have placed an order. All salmon tackle ships for free no matter what size the order!

The Newsletter will now have links attached to fishing tackle that I recommend. Just like the map links that are featured in "Red", the recommended tackle will be featured in "Red" with a link to my online store. You can either purchase the item or get a look at what I am talking about. This will be helpful to you because many of the things that I mention, I just assume everyone else knows what the colors and sizes are. For example: What is a **Kingfisher Cookie and Cream 3.5 Spoon**? Click on that item and you will see what I am talking about.

John's Sporting Goods Home Page

The improvements that I mentioned in the June Newsletter are still in the works. The online store portion of the project took more work than expected. A major overhaul is being worked on and will be debuted this summer

In the July Newsletter

Area 7 Opens for Chinook July 1

Area 7 Chinook Maps, new color maps

Area 9 Opens for Chinook July 16

Area 9 Chinook, New color maps
Staying Legal while Crabbing
Tackle Tip

Area 7 Chinook Opens July 1

**Daily limit of Chinook: One Chinook. WDFW
Speak: Keep the wild ones**

I believe that we are in for a real Chinook fishing treat this summer. As I type this column, fishing is great at Neah Bay, Westport and all points north of here. In addition to Chinook, very large returns of Coho and Pink salmon are expected this summer.

The San Juan Islands can be an intimidating place to fish for salmon. It is a large area and there is a large amount of information to consume in order to be successful. It is not as easy as going to Possession Bar and trolling up and down the West side of the Bar.

Don't be intimidated by the San Juan's. If you follow my directions, I believe that you will be a successful salmon angler in the Islands.

Before we get started, let me lay down some ground rules for fishing the San Juan's

- 1) Don't waste fishing time by running around. Stay put!
- 2) Fish the tides. Each spot that I mention only fishes well on a particular tide.
- 3) Fish ultra-close to the bottom

There are many good salmon fishing holes in the Islands and they all have

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Oct 1-Oct 31: Daily limit two salmon, only one chinook.. See closures

Feb. 16-April 30: Daily limit one salmon. See closures

Salmon Area 7:

July 1-July 31: Daily limit two salmon plus two additional Pinks, only one chinook. See boundaries and closures.

Aug. 1-Sept 30: Daily limit two salmon plus two additional Pinks, only one chinook. Release wild Coho. See boundaries and closures.

Oct. 1-Oct 31: Daily limit two salmon, only one chinook, release wild coho. See boundaries and closures.

Dec. 1-April 30: Daily limit two salmon, release wild chinook. See boundaries and closures.

Area 8-1:

Aug 1-Sept. 30: Daily limit two salmon plus two additional Pinks, release all chinook.

Oct. 1-Oct 31: Daily limit two salmon, release chinook.

Nov. 1-April 30: Daily limit two salmon, release wild chinook.

Area 8-2:

Aug 1-Sept. 30: Daily limit two salmon plus two additional Pinks, release all chinook. See closures

Oct. 1-Oct. 31: Daily limit two salmon, release all chinook. See closures

Nov. 1-April 30: Daily limit two salmon, release wild chinook.

Tulalip Terminal Fishery:

good Chinook fishing at different times during the summer. You can waste a whole lot of fishing time being in the wrong area. So, how do you where to fish?

Let me make a simple chart that will help you figure out where to fish:

July Chinook Fishing:

Lopez Flats, out going tide

Thatcher Pass, out going tide

Eagle Bluff (Cypress Island), Incoming tide

Point Lawrence, out going tide

Secret Harbor, Incoming tide

Hein Bank Buoy, out going tide in the morning

Tide Point, out going tide

Slime Rock (South End of Blakely), out going tide

August Chinook Fishing:

Pile Point, out going tide

Eagle Point, out going tide

In this Newsletter I will discuss July Chinook fishing and I will pick a couple of "High Percentage" places to fish for Chinook.

Thatcher Pass is my all time favorite place to fish in the San Juan's. You really don't fish in Thatcher Pass proper. You fish off to the side next to Pointer Island. Pointer is nothing more than a large rock that sits below the South end of Blakely Island. Along side Pointer, over to Black Rock and south for about a ¼ mile is a large underwater sand bar that provides a feeding area for Chinook. Depending on the tide, the water can run relatively fast through this area when the tide is going out. That's the time to fish. Most of the time you can only fish in one direction (into the tide) because the tide runs way too fast to troll with the tide.

When the water is running hard, I like to fish closer to Pointer Island. As the water

starts to slow down (close to low tide), I like to fish equal distance between Pointer Island and Black Rock.

It is easy to troll a couple hours here without seeing any action. This is where patience and perseverance pays off. There is absolutely no predictor of when a good Chinook bite will come on at Thatcher. It can happen as easily in the middle of the tide as it can at the end of the tide (See rule #1). Another thing that you will not see at Thatcher; is a prolonged bite. Everything will happen in a short 20-30 minute time period. Have a game plan that goes like this. Fish in the boat, get boat back into position, get the gear in the water. Have extra gear ready to snap on, just in case the gear that the fish was caught on got messed up. I cannot emphasize enough how important it is to get the gear back into that water as fast as possible. These fish are traveling in schools. They will be in the fishing zone and out of there after they get a quick meal. Be prepared! [Click here for Thatcher Pass Map](#)

If you get into a pretty good bite at Thatcher, these same fish are headed across the way to Tide Point (West Side of Cypress) and Eagle Bluff. When tide reverses itself at Thatcher, head immediately to the North Side of Tide Point. Troll from Tide Point to Eagle Bluff, but stay closer to Tide Point until the tide starts running hard. Then head to Eagle Bluff (Eagle Cliff).

Eagle Bluff is an interesting place to fish. There are so many subtleties to fishing here and it's all about tide and position. The tide to fish here is the incoming tide.

During the first half of the incoming tide, fish from a point that is half way between Tide Point and Eagle Cliff (the rock outcropping that sticks out). As the tide eases off stay closer to Eagle Cliff. You have to get yourself acquainted with the underwater bar that runs from Eagle Cliff



Tulalip Bubble: June 3-June 18, Open Friday through Monday Noon. Closed on June 19. Two salmon limit, plus two additional Pinks.

June 20-September 5, two salmon limit, plus two additional Pinks. Open Friday through Monday Noon.

September 10-25, open Saturday and Sunday, limit two salmon, plus two additional Pinks.

Closed June 19

Area 9:

July 16-Aug. 31: Daily limit two salmon, plus two additional Pinks. Release wild Chinook and Chum. See closures

Sept. 1-Sept 30: Daily limit two salmon, plus two additional Pinks.. Release Chinook and Chum.

Oct. 1-Oct 31: Daily limit two salmon, release chinook

Nov. 1-Nov 30: Daily limit two salmon, release wild chinook.

Jan. 16-April 15: Daily limit two salmon, release wild chinook.

Area 10:

June 1-June 30: Catch and release only. See closures

July 1-July 15: Daily limit two salmon, plus two additional Pinks. Release Chinook. See closures

July 16-Aug. 31: Daily limit two salmon, plus two additional Pinks. Release wild chinook. See closures

Sept. 1-Sept. 30: Daily limit two salmon, plus two additional Pinks. Release Chinook. See closures

Oct. 1-Jan. 31: Daily limit two salmon, release wild

to the next Point East. This is a small area where 75% of the Chinook are caught. To catch Chinook here you absolutely have to familiarize yourself with the contour of this Bar. Following this Bar with great precision by staying in 90 feet of water is one of the fine points of salmon angling that separates those who catch fish and those who do not. I will point this out on the Eagle Bluff map that I am providing you. [Click here for Eagle Bluff map](#)

Don't be satisfied with just fishing the two places that I have just mentioned. One of my favorite places to fish Chinook is at the Hein Bank buoy (the buoy that is in 30 feet of water), the last two weeks in July.

Salmon fishing tackle for the San Juan Islands is slightly different than tackle for Puget Sound. Hot Spot flashers that I always recommend are: **Red Racer** and **Purple Haze**.

Most of the Chinook in the Islands are feeding on Needlefish and Sand Lance. Good imitations of either are: **White Lightning Coho Killer, Army Truck Coho Killer** and **NG144R Needlefish Squid**. In all cases tie the spoons or squid onto the flasher with **30lb Maxima Ultra Green Leader material**.

Puget Sound Area 9 Chinook Opens July 16

Puget Sound should have decent return of Chinook this summer. When Area 9 opens on July 16, the fishing should be hot right from the beginning. Once again, careful planning is a must if you want to capitalize on the best fishing.

In the San Juan article, I mentioned that

Hein Bank is good the last two weeks of July. Those Chinook leave Hein Bank and head straight to Mid Channel Bank at Port Townsend. You can get a feel for the migration of these fish: Hein Bank to Mid Channel, from Mid Channel to Possession Bar, from there they split off to South Sound and to the Snohomish River. That might be simplifying things a tad, but it gives you an idea of where these fish are heading. Some of these fish take a short cut to Point no Point, then to Pilot Point and then down to South Sound.

Don't be satisfied just fishing one area while waiting for the fish to come to you. You should go to the fish and then follow them into the Sound.

Once again, the tide plays a pivotal role to where you can effectively fish for Chinook in the Sound. If you want to be a non-conformist, don't plan on bending your rod much. These fish have very particular habits that play a central role in their feeding habits.

Mid Channel Bank is the very first feeding stop for Chinook as they enter Puget Sound. The fish still have a very big appetite and they are very aggressive. This makes Mid Channel the premier Puget Sound Chinook fishing area.

Like many Chinook fishing areas, you cannot just go to Mid Channel and fish close to the bottom and expect to do well. I love the technical aspects of fishing Mid Channel.

To fish here, the outgoing tide is the only option. If the outgoing tide goes out less than six feet, don't go to Mid Channel because the fishing will not be very good. Those are the simple rules of the road.

When the tide just starts to run out, fish close to the most Eastern end of Mid Channel Bank and stay away from the big tide rip. If you get close to the rip, you

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chinook. See closures

Elliot Bay Fishery:

Aug. 19-Aug 28: Open Friday through Sunday only. Daily limit two salmon, release Chinook and Chum, plus two additional Pinks. Fishing with bait prohibited. Other restrictions apply. See closures.

Puget Sound Crab Areas 8-13

**Will Open at 7:00 a.m.
July 1, 2011.**

Will be open Thursday through Monday only through September 5, 2011. Any additional opening dates will be announced in October. Refer to Shellfish Rule Change toll free Hotline, (866) 880-5431

will be in sea weed city. The water will run faster and harder as it gains momentum. when this happens, slip back to the West and stay in 90-100 feet of water. When the water starts slowing down during the last couple hours of the tide, fish equal distance between Marrowstone Head and Point Wilson.

Because the water runs so fast at Mid Channel, it forces the bait fish close to the bottom. Common sense tells you what I am recommending next: Fish ultra close to the bottom. Fish within five feet of the bottom.

Trolling at Mid Channel requires you to throw out some of the standards for Chinook fishing. When the tide is running hard, you will be trolling with a severe line angle on your downrigger cable. Don't forget to let out more downrigger cable to compensate for the angle. You cannot slow down to reduce the cable angle because you will be trolling backwards at a rapid rate. It is mandatory to keep your speed up to keep your position. You will still be going backwards at the peak of the tide. [Click here for Mid Channel Map](#)

After Mid Channel Bank, the fish travel almost 20 miles to their next feeding area. There are two stops on the opposite sides of the Sound that Chinook stop at: Point No Point/Pilot Point and Possession Bar.

Point no Point/Pilot Point is a quick stop for Chinook and Possession Bar is the last major feeding area before the fish head to their destination. Point no Point/Pilot Point fish best the last week of July. Possession Bar can be good right from opening day and through the middle of August.

Possession Bar is the favorite place to fish for Chinook for most anglers who fish Puget Sound. This is what makes

Possession such an attractive fishing area: A good Chinook bite can commonly last for hours on either tide. It is also very accessible from many of the public boat launches in Puget Sound. You do not need the technical expertise as some of the other places I have mentioned.

If you are going to Possession Bar for the first time or have been there many times, it is good to know that the Bar is divided up into three main areas: East Side, West Side and the Horse Shoe Hole. I will pinpoint these three areas in this Map: [Click Here for Possession Bar Map.](#)

If you want to make your life real easy, go fish the West Side of the Bar. The West side encompasses the area from the Scatchet Head Buoy and south for approximately 2.77 miles. I wish I could pinpoint where the best fishing is in that 2.77 miles, but it changes every year. Last year the Chinook were down by the Scatchet Head Buoy. Other years the fish are at the far south end of the Bar. A good rule of thumb is a no-brainer in the fishing world: Stick close to the bait.

Fish the Bar in 90'-120' feet of water. Once you get past 150' deep the bottom drops off to 500' with a blink of an eye. Good control of your boat is very necessary at Possession because of the steep drop-off. Stay in that 90'-120'' with great precision and fish within 5' of the bottom at all times!

If you want to fish the tides and get away from the crowd at Possession, head on over to Pilot Point. Pilot fishes well the last week in July. I like Pilot Point because I can count on the fish biting on almost any incoming tide. This is a great early morning or late evening place to fish as long as the tide is coming in.

Start fishing at the houses on the beach at Pilot Point. From there, follow the



contour of the bar as it winds itself to Point no Point. You will find that the Bar is quite irregular, so keep an eye on your fish finder. Follow the Bar in 90-100 feet of water. This is one of the few places that I fish inside the Sound that I catch fish that are suspended. I commonly find Chinook at 60'-75' feet deep, even though the bottom might be 90'-100'.

[Pilot Point Map Click Here](#)

Puget Sound Chinook gear is slightly different than the gear used for the San Juan's. Stick with the same flashers: **Hot Spot Red Racer** and **Hot Spot Purple Haze**.

Behind the flasher I would recommend using these spoons: **3.5 Kingfisher Red Racer**, **3.5 Kingfisher Cookies and Cream** and **3.5 Kingfisher White lightening**.

Behind the flasher I would recommend using this squid: **Goldstar 3.5 OG142R Green/Glow**. I have the special squid leaders that I tie back in stock. The hooks were impossible to get last year, but that has been resolved. These leaders are tied with Mustad stainless steel 4/0 hooks on 30lb leader. These hooks are tied very close together so that they fit inside the squid without sticking out the back end of the squid. These are premium tied leaders with sharp hooks. [Click here](#) to order or view the Squid Leader.

Last year Tomic Plugs were the lure of choice at Possession Bar. All of you know how hard these plugs were to get. The colors and sizes that I recommend are: **5" #602** and **5" #603**. Both these plugs are mother of pearl/Glow. One plug has a red face and the other has a pink face. Use a **5/0 stainless Mustad Siwash** hook on these plugs. Tomic plugs are made to be used without a flasher. Just tie the

plug on the end of your fishing line and let it out.

A good general rule for trolling speeds for Chinook in Puget Sound with the exception of Mid Channel Bank: Troll 2.5 mph.

Let's cover some basics to wrap this column up:

Let a flasher out 25' feet behind the downrigger

Let a Tomic Plug out 25' behind the downrigger

Rig spoons and squid 42" inches behind a flasher

Rig spoons or squid with 30lb leader

Use an **X3CB Sampo** Ball Bearing swivel on the end of the fishing line

Apply **bait oil** on everything.

Herring, Anchovy or Sardine are all equally effective

Use a 12lb downrigger ball.

Staying Legal While Crabbing

Staying legal is straight forward while crabbing. Some of the things that I am about to mention are quite oblivious but it doesn't hurt to state the oblivious. A legal crab is 6 1/4" measured in front of the point of a male Dungeness crab. Soft shell crab is a tough thing to write about. What is soft shell and what isn't? Tough call. If the upper part of the leg of a Dungeness crab is soft to the touch, it is considered a soft shell. If you have never been crabbing, I don't know what you do for a frame of reference. The limit is 5 Dungeness crab. Everyone crabbing must have their name on the buoy of the trap that they are tending. You must have a crab catch record card (required for all ages). You are allowed to have two

crab pots per person in Puget Sound, excluding Hoods Canal.

Terminal Gear

Terminal gear is one of the most overlooked aspects of salmon fishing. Most everyone assumes that plugs, spoons flies and other salmon tackle come properly rigged. Manufacturers often do not put the best hooks and swivels on their products. Economics most often overrule the longest lasting or the most effective rigging.

With that said, let's take a look at some ideas and alterations to salmon gear. The ideas that I am going to present to you are not the hard core rules of salmon fishing, they are simply very good ideas that can make you a more effective angler. You might have a great idea that works well for you.

The first thing that I do when I get a new salmon spoon, is to replace the hooks. I only use one hook: 9510XXSS stainless steel Mustad hook. Call me old fashion for not using the Matzuo hooks. The Mustad 9510XXSS can be sharpened sharper than any other hook and best of all, it will not rust between fishing trips. I am not against using the latest and greatest, that is how I make my living. The question I always ask myself before changing my fishing ways, "How can this new product improve my odds?" The hook is where most anglers pay little attention and it is the most important thing that can be purchased for salmon fishing.

Everyone wants to buy "American" until they see the "Made in USA price label". There is very little fishing tackle made in the US anymore. However, there is one thing that we make in this country that is superior to

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anything made elsewhere. That product is Sampo swivels. Sampo swivels are the Boeing Planes of the fishing industry. Sampo swivels are a must for flasher fishing. If you tie an X3CB Sampo snap swivel to the end of your line, you will eliminate almost all line twist. One of the best things that I like about Sampo swivels, they never fail!

There is some terminal tackle not to use. Take the snap that is on the end of Hot Spot flashers and get rid of them. They are not something that I would ever consider using. They are poor quality and prone to failure on a large salmon. Tie your leader directly to the swivel at the end of the flasher.

Enjoy the Puget Sound Chinook fishing this summer and improve your odds by improving your tackle.

Discover One-day Pass
\$11.50 from the WILD system (at a license dealer, phone or on the internet)
\$10 base fee, \$1 (10%) transaction fee, \$.50 dealer fee

Information for hunting and fishing license holders
Holders of certain hunting and fishing licenses do not need a Discover Pass on Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) lands and water-access sites; instead a Vehicle Access Pass for WDFW lands and water-access sites will be issued free with purchase of a big-game or small-game hunting license, western Washington pheasant permit, trapping license, Watchable Wildlife decal, or saltwater or freshwater or combination recreational fishing license.

Discover Pass

Your ticket to Washington's great outdoors

Beginning July 1, the Discover Pass is required for vehicle access or parking on Washington state parks and recreation lands.

Note: Until the Discover Pass/Vehicle Access Pass takes effect, Vehicle Use Permits (VUPs) are required on WDFW lands. Current VUPs will be honored for the balance of the license year (through March 31, 2012).

How much does a Discover Pass Cost?

Annual Discover Pass
\$35 from the WILD system (at a license dealer, phone or on the internet)
\$30 base fee, \$3 (10%) transaction fee, \$2 dealer fee

**John's Sporting Goods
1913 Broadway
Everett, WA 98201**

**20% Discount
on your next in
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Expires July 30, 2011

Items that are excluded: Downriggers, Ace Line Hauler, Endurance Pot Puller, Shimano Products, G Loomis, Electronics, items that are discounted, on sale, repairs, parts and closeout items

One coupon per customer

Not valid for online purchases or mail order

Must have this Coupon in your hand at the time of Sale-No Exceptions